

Message Text

SECRET

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64/41

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-25 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /128 W
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O R 141354Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9780

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 7251

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, IS, SY

SUBJECT: ISRAELI-SYRIAN AIR BATTLE

REFC USDAO MSG 1372/131545Z SEP 73

1. FOR PURPOSES OF SHAPING US POSTURE TOWARD SEPT 13
CLASH OFF SYRIAN COAST, ONE KEY PIECE OF INFORMATION IS
STILL MISSING: DEGREE OF PROVOCATION TO SYRIANS OF ISRAELI
AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE MISSION WHICH SYRIANS FELT THEY
HAD CATTACK IN SOME STRENGTH. CLUES SHOULD BECOME
AVAILABLE ONLY ON SEPT 16, EARLIEST DATE DATT ABLE TO
OBTAIN APPOINTMENT WITH IDF FOR FULL BRIEFING.

2.. ASSUMING ISRAELIS DID NOTHING ADDITIONAL IN THIS MISSION
TO PROVOKE SYRIANS OR THAT ROUTE FLOWN FOLLOWED PAST PATTERNS,

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IT MUST BE BORNE IN MIND ISRAELIS HAVE BEEN FLYING

RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS OVER SYRIA FOR SOME TIME. ON GOOD
BET GOI--IF LEFT TO ITS OWN DEVICES--WILL CONTINUE FLIGHTS,
CLASHES LIKE THAT OF SEPTEMBER 13 MAY BE REPEATED, ESPECIALLY
SINCE SYRIANS HAVE RECORD FROM LAST FALL AND EARLY WINTER OF
DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO THROW GOOD PLANES AND TANKS
AFTER BAD.

3. WE ARE UNABLE TO JUDGE HOW ESSENTIAL IT IS FOR ISRAEL TO
HAVE INTELLIGENCE ACQUIRED BY THESE AERIAL MISSIONS. BUT WE
BELIEVE US SHOULD EXAMINE THIS QUESTION WITH CRITICAL EYE,
SINCE CLASHES LIKE THAT OF SEPT 13 OBVIOUSLY ARE DANGEROUS FOR
MIDDLE EAST STABILITY AND MOST HARMFUL TO MIDDLE EAST
ATMOSPHERE.

4 THAT ISRAELIS MAY THEMSELVES BE UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT
POLPACCAL RAMIFICATIONS OF MILITARY ACTION LIKE THIS COULD
BE READ INTO CAUTION WITH WHICH EBAN ANSWERED ME ON THIS SUBJECT
LAST EVENING. HE HAD JUST COME FROM CABINET MEETING AND REPLIED
IN GENERAL TERMS, SAYING THAT BATTLE TOOK PLACE SOMEWHERE
"OVER MEDITERRANEAN ." OTHER FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICERS AT
RECEPTION GAVE SIMILARLY VAGUE REPLIES AND SEEMED TO WISH
TO AVOID DISCUSSING SUBJECT, OTHER THAN NOTING ISRAELIS DID NOT
EXPECT BATTLE TO BECOME FACTOR IN ICAO CONFERENCE, SINCE IT
HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH CIVIL AVIATION.

5. I INVITE ATTENTION OF WASHINGTON ANALYSTS TO MOST INTERESTING
SPECULATIVE INTERPRETATION IN MESSAGE BEING SENT BY DATT,
THEME OF WHICH IS POSSIBLE SYRIAN MOTIVES IN CHALLENGING IDF
AT JUST THIS TIME.
KEATING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TELAV07251
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730932/aaaaaxiz.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Sep-2001 by rowellE0>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI-SYRIAN AIR BATTLE REFC USDAO MSG 1372/131545Z SEP 73
TAGS: MILI, IS, SY
To: SECSTATE WASHDC AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO JERUSALEM ROME USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005